Ralph Allen’s Mausoleum gains Heritage Lottery Fund support

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St Mary’s Churchyard, Claverton, is home to Ralph Allen’s Mausoleum – a Grade II listed building and final resting place of the influential Bath entrepreneur and philanthropist, a hugely influential figure during the 18th century who established the 'Cross Post' postal system and deployed his fortune in establishing stone mines on the southern periphery of the city, promoting Bath Stone, his own mansion at Prior Park being one of the primary examples.

The mausoleum was the subject of a recent successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and work will commence in the summer to restore it to its former glory.

Designed just prior to Ralph Allen’s death in 1764, and built soon after, the pyramid-topped Bath Stone mausoleum features columns and a chest tomb in the centre. Some accounts maintain that Allen viewed the plans for the Grade II listed monument while on his deathbed.

The HLF bid, put together by members of St Mary’s Church, Claverton was submitted after a recent review of the structure highlighted it as being in danger of collapse. This will be the first major repair to the tomb since 1967.

St Mary's Church Committee Chairman, Stephen Green, said: “Ralph Allen was an important local character who not only helped to shape the future of the postal system at the time, but had a significant impact in creating Bath as we see it today.

"The Mausoleum is an integral part of Bath’s heritage, and to be able to secure it for future generations to appreciate is something that many people in the city are passionate about.

"We launched an appeal in October 2011, and we’re delighted to say that our efforts have been rewarded. We’re all looking forward to seeing both the commencement and the completion of the restoration work.

"The restoration will entail comprehensive repair of the stonework and wrought iron railings, and create an interface with local schools and the university.”

In addition to the repair work, the HLF grant will support activities that will help the wider public to learn about and understand the mausoleum, Ralph Allen and his place in the history of Bath. Interpretation panels will be placed around the mausoleum site to provide visitors with information on Allen's life, his local and national achievements, and his link with Claverton. Educational materials and a heritage trail for use by local schools will be designed, and links made with the University of Bath to help students studying 18th century building techniques and the use of Bath Stone.

Commenting on the grant award, Richard Bellamy, HLF's acting Head of South West, said: “We are delighted to be able to support this project, which will ensure that Ralph Allen’s contributions, not just to the distinctive character of Bath, but to the wider history of the communications systems we have inherited today, can be preserved for and understood by future generations.”

Further Information

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